

## Be a Good Neighbor

Good neighbors look out for each other. Join a neighborhood watch group and pledge to call the police should you see anything suspicious in your neighborhood. Ask a trusted neighbor to pick-up your papers and mail when you're on vacation. Notify the Colma Police Department when you leave and ask for vacation checks. The dispatcher will ask you who's authorized to be on your property. We will also ask for a contact number for you should any problems arise during your vacation.

Remember, the burglar will simply bypass your home if it requires too much effort or requires more skill and tools than they possess. Although home burglaries may seem random in occurrence, they actually involve a selection process. The selection process is simple. Choose an unoccupied home with the easiest access, the greatest amount of cover, and with the best escape routes.

Take these steps to minimize your risk by making your home unattractive to potential burglars.

## Engrave Valuables

We recommend that you engrave your drivers' license, not your social security number, on televisions, stereos, computers, and small electronic appliances. If your valuables are stolen, law enforcement can identify and notify you if your stolen items are recovered.

We also recommend that you photograph your valuables in their locations around your home and make a list of the make, model, and serial numbers. Not only is this important for proof when filing insurance claims, you can also provide this list to police who will then enter these serial numbers into a nationwide data base of stolen property. Should your property be found, the police will know it's stolen and take steps to return it to you.



## Colma Police Department

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## Colma Police Department



## Home Security Tips

*Designed to Discourage Burglars*



*Excellence is our Standard*

## *Home Exterior*

Make the exterior of your home unappealing to burglars and intruders. The area surrounding your yard should be well lit up. With the increased availability of low cost LED lights, the cost to run these lights has decreased dramatically. Install motion sensors on your exterior lights. This will not only notify you of an intruder but will notify them you're prepared.

Keep your yard and property neat, and tidy. Trees and bushes should not conceal your doors, gates, and windows. This could provide cover for a burglar.

There should be no way for a burglar to climb or have access to the second story windows. Don't store your ladder on the side of the house.

Lawn gates and sheds should be kept locked at all times. This bit of home security advice is the easiest-to-apply, but the most overlooked by home owners.

## *Alarm Systems*

Alarm systems definitely have a place in a home security plan and are effective, if used properly. Alarm systems deter burglaries because they increase the potential and fear of being caught and arrested by the police. The deterrent value comes from the alarm company lawn sign and from the alarm decals on the windows. Home and apartment burglars will usually bypass a property with visible alarm signs and may go to another property. Some insurance companies offer discounts that help defer the cost of the alarm. Check with your insurance company first before installing an alarm.

## *Secure your Doors*

A significant amount of break-ins occur when the burglar simply kicks the door open. All exterior doors should be made of solid wood or metal. The wood should be at least 1¾ of an inch thick and equipped with double cylinder deadbolt locks. Metal plates on the door frames should reinforce the door jam and the hinges. Strike plates need to be securely fastened to door jams with long screws that attach to the studs surrounding the door frame.

Installing wide-angle-view peepholes is a very good idea. Always remember, it's your house and you don't have to open the door for strangers.

## *Sliding Glass Doors*

Sliding glass doors are secured by latches not locks. They are vulnerable to being forced open from the outside because of these inherently defective latch mechanisms. This can easily be prevented by inserting a wooden dowel or stick into the track thus preventing or limiting movement.

## *Windows*

Windows are left unlocked and open at a much higher rate than doors. An open window, visible from the street or alley could be the sole reason your home was selected by a burglar. Ground floor windows are more susceptible to break-ins for obvious reasons. Upper floor windows become attractive if they can be accessed from a stairway, tree, and fence, climbing on balconies, or using the ladder you store there. Windows have latches, not locks and therefore should have secondary blocking devices to prevent sliding them open from the outside. Inexpensive wooden dowels and sticks work well for horizontal sliding windows and through-the-frame pins work well for vertical sliding windows. Remember, don't leave your house with windows that are left open or unlocked.

## *Lighting*

Interior lighting shows signs of life and activity inside a residence at night. A darkened home night-after-night sends the message to burglars that you are away from your home. Inexpensive light timers can be purchased at any home improvement store. They should be used on a daily basis, not just when you're away for an extended period. It's also comforting not to have to enter a dark residence when you return home. The same light timers can be used to turn on radios or television sets to further enhance the illusion of occupancy.

## *Home Safes*

Having a safe in your home is a wise investment. Home safes are designed to keep the smash and grab burglar, nosey kids, dishonest babysitter or housekeeper from gaining access to important documents and personal property. Small home safes need to be anchored into the floor or permanent shelving. If this is not done, the burglar can simply carry smaller safes from the house and open them somewhere else.

## *GPS Tracking*

Be sure to register your mobile phones, tablets, and laptops with tracking services such as, "Find my iPhone" or "Google Latitude". Should your device be stolen, the police can use these services to track their location. Remember, you can't register your devices after they're stolen or lost.